

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PUTTING THE GULF OF MEXICO BACK TO WORK ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 10, 2011

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1229) to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to facilitate the safe and timely production of American energy resources from the Gulf of Mexico:

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of H.R. 1229.

H.R. 1229 is important because while the moratoria on shallow water drilling and deep water drilling were lifted on May 28, 2010 and October 12, 2010 respectively, since that time, BOEM has only issued 51 permits for new shallow water wells and only a handful of permits for deepwater activities that were subject to the moratorium. This is in comparison to an average of 10 permits issued per week pre-spill.

While I support the safety requirements that the Department of the Interior has put into place since the Macondo Spill, I continue to hear from companies that the BOEM is rejecting drilling applications without providing adequate guidance as to what is needed to get the application approved. This is getting us nowhere. We need this production.

America's offshore, primarily the Gulf of Mexico, supplies 30% of American oil and 10% of American natural gas. Yet, a recent study done by Wood Mackenzie concluded that nearly one third of American deepwater production would become uneconomic if the Department of the Interior increases the time spent reviewing and permitting drilling permit applications. Based on these figures, some estimate as many as 125,000 jobs could be lost in 2015.

That is why I support H.R. 1229 and why it is desperately needed. I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

HONORING ANNE FULTON

HON. CORY GARDNER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Anne Fulton from Greeley, Colorado.

Anne's story reminds us that out of tragedy, opportunity is born. One August 16, 2003, Anne lost her 19-year-old son Judd Fulton in a fatal automobile accident. Judd was an exemplary student and athlete. He was a graduate of the inaugural class at Northridge High School in Greeley in 2003. Not only did Judd excel in the classroom, he was a phenomenal student athlete. It was his skill on the football field that earned him a scholarship to Black

Hills State University in Spearfish, South Dakota. Judd was returning to the University from his home in Colorado at the time of the accident.

Out of this horrible tragedy Anne Fulton, Judd's mother, saw opportunity. In 2005, Anne started a Memorial Scholarship Fund in her son's name. The Judd Kazuto Fulton Memorial Scholarship is a dedicated scholarship fund for Northridge High School students and Black Hills State University football players.

Every year, Anne holds a fundraiser for the scholarship by holding a Golf Tournament in Eaton, Colorado. This tournament happens every May and raises money and increases awareness for this memorial scholarship. Anne describes her son as unassuming, dedicated, hard working team player, with a willingness to do whatever it took to get the job done. Students who receive this scholarship exemplify the same characteristics.

It is my honor to remember Judd Fulton today, and to recognize Anne Fulton for her never-ending dedication, hard work, and for improving the lives of students in Greeley, Colorado. She has provided many with opportunities they could have only dreamed about. Thanks to Anne's generosity and tireless effort, the dream of these students has become reality.

INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMUTER RELIEF ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to introduce the Commuter Relief Act, legislation that will expand the popular transit benefits program to provide commuters with options to avoid high gas prices, make it easier for companies to provide transportation benefits for all employees, and spur public-private partnerships for commuting purposes.

Americans have made it clear that they want transportation options. In a recent study by the Pew Charitable Trusts, 52 percent of Americans support increased funding for bike, pedestrian and public transportation programs. On average, transportation costs are now Americans' second largest expense after housing. As gas prices increase, many Americans are already changing their daily behaviors to decrease fuel costs: taking fewer trips, keeping their cars tuned, even trading in their gas guzzlers for more fuel-efficient models. As we search for solutions to our congested roadways, increasing gas costs and expanding waistlines, it's time for the federal government to become more aggressive in helping to provide choices.

For too long, the federal government has supported commuters who drove to work, but has not helped those who use other methods of transportation. Through the incentives in this bill, the federal government can support

consumers who wish to use environmentally friendly, active transportation modes that save them money in the long run, such as public transit, carpooling, biking, walking and telecommuting. This not only makes environmental and public health sense, it makes economic sense: at \$4 a gallon gasoline, American families can save \$5.6 billion each year on gasoline costs by using transit. Bicycle commuters annually save an average of \$1,825 in auto-related costs, conserve 145 gallons of gasoline, and avoid 50 hours of gridlock traffic.

The Commuter Relief Act will provide consumers with commuting choices, and make it easier for companies to implement commuting programs that benefit all employees. It ensures that the federal government is a better partner as we work to provide Americans with transportation choices, reduce congestion and decrease our dependence on foreign oil.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this legislation to support businesses in their effort to provide choices for commuting employees.

ELEVATING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of my colleagues legislation I am introducing to amend the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), including reauthorizing the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). Religious freedom, often referred to as the first freedom, is of central import to the American experiment. As such it should feature prominently in U.S. foreign policy.

Recognizing that this critical issue and other human rights related issues are often relegated to the sidelines within the State Department, I authored legislation more than ten years ago, in 1998, to establish the International Religious Freedom Office at the State Department, headed by an ambassador at-large, and to create the USCIRF—an independent, bipartisan commission charged with monitoring the status of freedom of religion or belief abroad and providing policy recommendations to the President, Secretary of State, and Congress.

Since the passage of this legislation, religious freedom has been elevated within U.S. foreign policy. But it still does not enjoy the preeminence it deserves. And sadly, a strong U.S. voice on this critical issue has arguably never been more needed.

According to a Pew Research Study released in December 2009, one-third of all nations, containing 70 percent of the world's population, severely restrict religious freedom. We need look no further than the daily newspapers to know that these statistics are not

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

mere numbers. Rather, they are sobering realities for millions of people of faith around the globe. Consider the following headlines from recent weeks alone: "Chinese Christians Face Tense Easter in Beijing," "Egyptian Copts, Reeling From Violence, Want Protection," "Baha'i Citizens Are Forced to Leave Iran," "Pakistan's Other Blemish: Anti-Religious Violence," "Indonesia Pressured Over Ahmadiyah Muslim Sect Killings," and "Thousands of Cameras Watch China's Uighurs, Inhibiting Discourse."

The bill I introduce today will make a number of strategic improvements to the Religious Freedom Office at the State Department. To start, it places the ambassador-at-large in the office of the Secretary of State as opposed to burying it within the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. This change is more in keeping with the original intent of the legislation that Congress passed. Over successive administrations this critical position has not been treated with the seniority it deserves and this revised language will help rectify this problem.

The legislation also provides the ambassador with oversight and management authority of the IRF Office and other religiously oriented positions and programs at the State Department and carves out funding in the larger Human Rights and Democracy Fund to enable the IRF office to promote religious freedom through advocacy, reporting and programming. The legislation requires the Secretary of State, in coordination with the Department of Defense, Homeland Security, the Treasury and the U.S. Agency for International Development to issue a one-time report to Congress on the best uses of foreign assistance to promote religious freedom and religious engagement.

In addition the legislation requires religious freedom training for every Foreign Service Officer (FSO) and states that USCIRF must be involved in that training. American embassies abroad must be islands of freedom. Whether in Vietnam, China, Pakistan or Iraq—every FSO should be trained and committed to advocating for those whose voices have been silenced by their own governments. This mandatory training will help ensure that our diplomatic corps is equipped in this regard.

My legislation also strengthens the "Countries of Particular Concern" (CPC) designation process and effectiveness. CPCs are countries whose governments are found to have engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedom. The amended language will require that CPC designations are made 90 days after the issuance of the State Department's annual religious freedom report. One hundred and twenty days after a country has been designated a CPC, the Secretary of State must submit a report to Congress that identifies the action taken, the purpose of the action, and an evaluation of its effectiveness and impact. Also included is language tightening the President's waiver authority, so that indefinite waivers are not an option.

Very significantly, this legislation will reauthorize the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom until September 30, 2018. USCIRF, unlike the State Department, is unencumbered by the impulse to maintain good bilateral relations above all else—an impulse which sadly can result in critical issues of religious freedom being sidelined in the pursuit of broader foreign policy goals.

USCIRF, as an independent, bipartisan Federal Government commission, has been a reliable voice for the world's persecuted people. It monitors and reports on religious freedom abroad and makes informed policy recommendations to Members of Congress, the President and the State Department, based in part on information gathered during extensive travel and meetings with senior foreign officials.

USCIRF regularly holds briefings and hearings for interested parties on and off the Hill and is frequently called upon to provide expert witness testimony to Congress.

Just in the last year the Commission has taken a leadership role on a series of key issues. It was quick to recognize the strategic importance and courageous voice of the late Shahbaz Bhatti, Pakistan's federal minister of Minorities Affairs, an outspoken critic of his nation's draconian blasphemy laws. During a critical time for the people of Sudan, it also issued special recommendations on the implementation of the historic Comprehensive Peace Agreement. It has made a series of policy recommendations aimed at preserving and protecting Iraq's besieged religious minorities. It also has actively worked with dozens of Hill offices on combating the "defamation of religions" resolution before the United Nations.

In short, ensuring that the commission is reauthorized is of paramount importance. In a Constitution Day speech, President Ronald Reagan famously described our founding documents which enshrine basic liberties, among them religious freedom, as a "covenant we have made not only with ourselves, but with all of mankind." Passage of this legislation will go a long way in helping us keep that covenant. I urge my colleagues' support.

A TRIBUTE TO THE IOWA ENERGY

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize the Iowa Energy, the 2011 Champions of the National Basketball Association's Developmental League and pride of Iowa.

The Energy captured the crown on Friday, April 29th, before an enthusiastic home crowd at the Wells Fargo Arena, where they defeated the defending NBA D-League champions the Rio Grande Valley Vipers by a score of 119–111.

This is the first league championship for the Iowa Energy, which is affiliated with the Chicago Bulls and the Phoenix Suns. The team's establishment took place in 2007, inspired by the vision of Jerry Crawford, Gary Kirke, Sheldon Ohringer and Paul Drey to bring quality basketball to the heart of the heartland. The franchise has continually grown in stature and success, culminating this year with not only the team's first championship of many to come but also the D-League's MVP, Iowa State University Alumni Curtis Stinson. The Energy can also boast that the two largest crowds in the entire NBA D-League's history are solely the product of this franchise and the incredible

basketball sporting event just concluded in Des Moines.

There can only be one champion at the end of any sport's season, and I am honored to represent the great state where the Iowa Energy play and win. This feat marks years of unwavering commitment by the players, management and fans of the team and represents the best of Iowa's people and their well known work ethic.

Mr. Speaker, all Iowans should take heart in MVP Curtis Stinson's proclamation after the championship game: "We're certified; we're champions. They can't ever take this away from us." I know that all members of this body join me in congratulating the Iowa Energy and the tradition of basketball excellence that I expect to continue well into the future.

TRIBUTE TO RIDGECREST ARMED FORCES DAY 2011

HON. KEVIN MCCARTHY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the efforts by many in the community of Ridgecrest to honor our service men and women on Armed Forces Day 2011.

The City of Ridgecrest is home to the Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) China Lake. NAWS China Lake was established during World War II for the purpose of weapons testing. Since then, NAWS China Lake has become the premier weapons development laboratory for the United States Navy. Many of my constituents living in Ridgecrest work at NAWS China Lake and take great pride in the support they provide to our Nation and they are properly recognized for their efforts on this day.

The 2011 Armed Forces Day is especially significant to the community of Ridgecrest because this year marks two significant anniversaries for NAWS China Lake and the United States. This year marks the centennial anniversary of Naval Aviation. In this anniversary, the Navy will be commemorating 100 years of Naval Aviation and honoring a century of mission-ready men and women and their many aviation achievements. Additionally, this year is significant for veterans of World War II because it will mark the 70th anniversary of our Nation's entry into that war.

There have been many significant achievements by the scientists and engineers at China Lake. For example, they developed the air-intercept missile 9 Sidewinder in 1950. This has become the world's most used air-to-air missile technology. Additionally, other rockets and missiles developed or tested at China Lake include the Mighty Mouse, Zuni, Shrike, Joint Stand-off Weapon and Joint Direct-Air Attack Munition.

Considering these two significant anniversaries and their importance to the City of Ridgecrest it gives me great pleasure to recognize the Ridgecrest community and their efforts there to pay tribute to the dedicated men and women who devote their lives to military service.